

REMARKS

Claims 1-29 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 7, 12, 17, 22 and 29 are currently amended. Claims 1, 12 and 22 are independent.

The Office Action objects to Claims 7, 17 and 29 for informalities. Applicants have amended these claims accordingly.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Office Action rejects Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 8-12, 15, 16, 18-22, 24-26 and 28 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 4,917,207 to Yasui ("Yasui"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection as follows.

The present invention discloses an improved snowmobile drive train that isolates the drive train pulleys from engine heat while maintaining precise pulley alignment. The isolation of the pulleys is achieved using a support member, which is fixedly attached to the snowmobile frame. The support member maintains the pulleys at a substantially constant distance apart from each other. In addition, the support member includes an internal gear cavity that houses the pulley gear and the sprocket gear. However, the support member does not house the pulleys. Rather, as depicted in FIG. 5, the pulleys are disposed outboard of the support member. Advantageously, this configuration isolates the drive train pulleys from engine heat while maintaining precise pulley alignment.

Yasui teaches a suspension arrangement for a small snowmobile, which includes a support member (housing assembly 29) that is rigidly affixed to the snowmobile casing. Referring to FIG. 3, the housing assembly 29 appears to at least partially support pulleys 25, 26.

However, in contrast to the present invention, the pulleys 25, 26 are clearly mounted within the housing assembly 29 rather than outboard of the housing assembly 29.

Applicants have amended independent Claims 1, 12 and 22 to recite that the drive train pulleys are mounted outboard of the support member. As noted above, Yasui's pulleys 25, 26 are instead mounted with the housing assembly 29. Yasui, therefore, does not anticipate Claims 1, 12 and 22, particularly as amended.

In view of the above, the rejection of Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 8-12, 15, 16, 18-22, 24-26 and 28 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) has been respectfully traversed.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Office Action rejects Claims 3 and 13 as unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Yasui in view of U.S. Patent 4,069,882 to Leonard ("Leonard"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection as follows. Yasui has been distinguished from these claims as noted above. Leonard fails to cure the deficiencies of Yasui. Accordingly, the rejection of Claims 3 and 13 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) has been respectfully traversed.

The Office Action rejects Claims 4, 14 and 23 as unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Yasui in view of U.S. Patent 4,088,777 to Juto et al. ("Juto"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection as follows. Yasui has been distinguished from these claims as noted above. Juto fails to cure the deficiencies of Yasui. Accordingly, the rejection of Claims 4, 14 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) has been respectfully traversed.

The Office Action rejects Claims 7, 17 and 29 as unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Yasui in view of U.S. Patent 5,685,387 to Rioux et al. ("Rioux"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection as follows. Yasui has been distinguished from these claims as noted

above. Rioux fails to cure the deficiencies of Yasui. Accordingly, the rejection of Claims 7, 17 and 29 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) has been respectfully traversed.

Conclusion

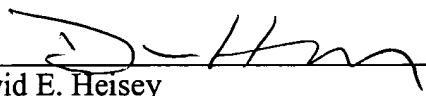
It is respectfully submitted that the rejection has been traversed as to the independent claims and all claims depending from them, and that the application is in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned to discuss remaining issues, if there are any.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this and concurrent replies to charge payment (or credit any overpayment) to Deposit Account No. 50-2298 for any additional fees required under 37 CFR 1.16 or 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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2/24/2004


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